CLAIMS

1-54.   (Cancelled)

55.   (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

populating an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein

said populating is performed by a network device and comprises sending a

request to another network device, and receiving a response from said

another network device, wherein said response includes said destination

user group identifier, wherein

said access control list is a role-based access control list,

said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of

a destination,

said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to

store a source user group identifier and a destination user group

field configured to store a destination user group identifier,

said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices,

said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of said

source,

said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network

devices,

said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role

of said destination, and

said access control list is configured to allow said source user group

identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared.

56.   (Cancelled)

57.   (Cancelled)

58.   (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:

comparing a user group of a packet with said destination user group.

59.   (Original) The method of claim 58, wherein

said user group of said packet is a source user group,

said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and

said destination is said destination of said packet.

60.   (Original) The method of claim 59, wherein

said source user group is assigned to a source of said packet based on a role of

        said source, and

said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role of said

        destination.

61.   (Original) The method of claim 59, wherein

said source user group is indicated by a source user group identifier stored in said

        packet, and

said destination user group is indicated by a destination user group stored in a

        network device receiving said packet.

62.   (Original) The method of claim 59, further comprising:

determining said source user group; and

determining said destination user group by looking up said destination user group

        in an access control list.

63.   (Cancelled)

64.   (Original) The method of claim 62, wherein said determining said source

user group comprises:

extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein

        said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

65.   (Previously Presented) A computer program product comprising:

a first set of instructions, executable on a computer system, configured to populate

      an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein said

      to populate is performed by a network device and comprises sending a

      request to another network device, and receiving a response from said

      another network device, wherein said response includes said destination

      user group identifier, wherein

      said access control list is a role-based access control list,

      said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of

            a destination,

      said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to

            store a source user group identifier and a destination user group

            field configured to store a destination user group identifier,

      said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices,

      said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of said

            source,

      said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network

            devices,

      said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role

            of said destination, and

      said access control list is configured to allow said source user group

            identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared;

            and

computer readable storage media, wherein said computer program product is

      encoded in said computer readable storage media.

66.   (Original) The computer program product of claim 65, further comprising:

a second set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to

      compare a user group of a packet with said destination user group.

67. (Original) The computer program product of claim 66, wherein said user group of said packet is a source user group,

said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and

said destination is said destination of said packet.

68. (Original) The computer program product of claim 67, further comprising:

a third set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to determine said source user group; and

a fourth set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to determine said destination user group by looking up said destination user group in an access control list.

69. (Original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein said third set of instructions comprises:

a first subset of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

70. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:

means for populating an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein said populating is performed by a network device and comprises sending a request to another network device, and receiving a response from said another network device, wherein said response includes said destination user group identifier, wherein said access control list is a role-based access control list,

said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of a destination,

said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to store a source user group identifier and a destination user group field configured to store a destination user group identifier,

said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices,

said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of said

source,

said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network

devices,

said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role

of said destination, and

said access control list is configured to allow said source user group

identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared.

71.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 70, further comprising:

means for comparing a user group of a packet with said destination user group.

72.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein

said user group of said packet is a source user group,

said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and

said destination is said destination of said packet.

73.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 72, further comprising:

means for determining said source user group; and

means for determining said destination user group by looking up said destination

user group in an access control list.

74.   (Original) The apparatus of claim 73, wherein said means for determining

said source user group comprises:

means for extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein

said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

75-117. (Cancelled)